

HIGHLAND, ILLINOIS
MINUTES OF REGULAR SESSION
TELECOMMUNICATIONS ADVISORY BOARD
CITY HALL, 115 BROADWAY
MONDAY JULY 11, 2011
7:00 PM

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Marron at 7:00 PM.

Roll Call

Members present: Chairman George Marron, Vice-Chairman Jon Boulanger, and Board Member Sharon Rusteberg.

Also present: Councilman Neill Nicolaides, City Manager Mark Latham, Operations Manager Steve Ferguson and City staff member Andrea Enright.

Approval of Minutes

Vice-Chairman Boulanger made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 11, 2011 Telecommunications Advisory Board meeting; seconded by Chairman Marron. All voted in favor; the motion carried.

Reports

Updated List of Customer Sign Up and Installs: Steve Ferguson stated that HCS currently has 100 customers hooked up to the internet services. Chairman Marron asked Steve to confirm the break even number for the year and Steve confirmed the total number as 900 customers. Steve said that everything is going well and there is support for the project.

Vice-Chairman Boulanger asked if there has been any negative feedback. Steve said that there are a couple of instances where a business is supposed to get on our email their emails are not being recognized because they have switched on the HCS server. Therefore, their emails start to block emails being sent out to other email servers because the switch has not registered. Steve indicated that for the most part HCS has been able to address the problems with the resolution with reconfigurations.

Steve said that there are problems with Spengler-Boulanger Funeral Home speed. He said that this is the only problem that HCS has had with speed and that it is a unique situation because the speed works perfectly when tested from the ONT all the way up until the PC; however, when the computer needs to download information it is unable to do so at the correct rate of speed. He stated that HCS is working with Calix, Logicalis, and Cogent to resolve the problem and that HCS is trying to determine if the problem is on our end. Steve said that overall everything has been moving very well.

Board Member Rusteberg asked who does the troubleshooting when issues such as this come up. Steve explained that the Fiber Technicians will go out to test the equipment and that Rick from the America's Center does the headend troubleshooting. He indicated that in everyone works together to resolve issues. He said that HCS is also working on putting together standard operating procedures to work through the issues.

Chairman Marron stated that it is better to have problems now than later.

Board Member Rusteberg stated that Homer Rusteberg, CPA has been very pleased with the services received from HCS.

Mark Latham asked how many phone HCS has transferred over. Steve stated that it took a while to get the first number transferred, but there are currently two and that there will continue to be more transferred over every day moving forward.

Chairman Marron said that he loves his internet service and it saves him a lot of time.

Phase II Status: Steve presented the Phase II map and explained that the light green area of the map is considered the overbuild of Phase I as it goes back to the residents missed in the initial pass through. He said that the next portion of Phase II is the dark green area of the map and are new to the design of the Phase II.

Steve explained that if they have difficulty obtaining fiber the construction will still move forward so that they can be more efficient at the time the fiber arrives.

Mark asked if the proposed 1800 residents for Phase II were just in the light green. Steve said that he is unsure, but there are definitely 1800 residents being reached in the second phase. Board Member Rusteberg asked if those were included in the blue portion of the map and Steve explained that there were 1800 additional residents in the second phase excluding the blue portion.

Connection to Troy Update: Mark said that some of the larger businesses and banks are not signing up for services until everything with the redundant line is finished. Board Member Rusteberg asked when that would be completed. Mark said that plans should be received by the contractors on the 24th or 28th of July. Mark said that as soon as she receives the plans they will move forward and the contractors should be able to move forward right away.

Councilman Nicolaides asked if there was enough fiber to complete the redundant line project and Mark explained that there is enough fiber in house to do so. Chairman Marron asked if HCS has heard from the state and has received approval to move forward. Mark stated that HCS has received approval from the state.

Mark stated that we are gaining access to Ameren poles between Route 4 and Troy as result of a pending agreement related to another City issue.

Councilman Nicolaides asked where the main fiber line would be if the redundant line was going to be aerial. Mark explained that it would be underground. Councilman Nicolaides asked if it would be underground to a certain point and then aerial all the way to Triad High School. Mark said that from Highland all the way to Route 4 overpass until the old road bed the line would be underground. From there, the line would cross over Route 4 and go all the way to the high school because it is part of the agreement. Mark said that it would go underground to the middle school and if they could make it to the high school that way then they would do it, but if

not then the line would go aerial. Councilman Nicolaides pointed out that there is mostly swamp between the middle school and high school.

Councilman Nicolaides asked where the main fiber line was. Mark explained that the main feeder is on the 34 line that is south of the railroad tracks. Councilman Nicolaides asked if both the lines would be aerial near the swamp on Route 4. Mark said they would not be. Board Member Rusteberg asked if they would both be underground at that point and Mark said that he does not believe so.

Mark said that he and Steve met with HomeTel and they are going to be providing service to the subdivision by Troy High School and they asked about using HCS's fiber line. Mark said that they will have to see how that goes.

Chairman Marron asked what the time estimate was for Phase II. Steve stated that HCS is waiting for equipment to come in which is expected to arrive on July 12th. He said from there HCS is about 2-3 weeks away from beginning construction. He said once the MSTs begin to go up business will begin to increase dramatically.

Councilman Nicolaides asked if residents would be hooked up before video is ready and Steve indicated that they would. Steve said that postcards were already sent out and Mark followed by stating that a lot of people want the internet. Chairman Marron said that a lot of residents still have satellite. Steve continued by stating that Andrea made postcards for the residents that the services are available to and once we reach those areas they will be sent out and followed up with phone calls. He said that Rebecca placed an announcement on Facebook regarding the addresses available for service and as a result, HCS has received a lot of calls.

Staffing: Steve said that Rick Bryce with America's Center has been serving as our headend technician since we began, but he has accepted another position in California. As a result, HCS has decided to pursue a full time position and the description will be available online, Belleville News Democrat, and various IT websites. Steve explained that as the program grows, a full time person will be needed to manage the headend.

Porting of Phone Lines: Steve explained again that telephone number porting has begun and that there were some glitches, but the issues have been resolved.

Channel Lineup: Steve said that one month to five weeks ago, HCS received word from Fidelity and Scott Bowles that EchoStar, the company HCS was going to get their programs from, decided that they would rather pursue larger customers and not municipalities. He said that EchoStar's prices increased and as a result, HCS switched to AVAIL. He said that the channel lineup is being put together.

He said that the only difference is that AVAIL has gap channels and HCS now has to purchase receivers. Steve said that the NTCC has confirmed that all of the contracts have been signed and HCS will not lose any time in regards to the contracts. Steve said that Fidelity has been reassuring in stating that the receivers will be received by September 1 and will not be a problem.

Steve said that some of the channels will appear in SD and not HD as a result of the switching programs.

Andrea asked if this was the final channel lineup and Steve said it was not. Steve also said that the pricing model should be available soon.

Mark said that he was hoping that at the next meeting the Committee would recommend the lineup to Council and Council could vote on it in the second meeting in August. Therefore, HCS would be ready to move forward.

Steve said that the channel lineup needs to be broken into three tiers still and Chairman Marron asked if that would be provided at the next meeting. Steve indicated that was the goal.

RF/ IPTV Status: Steve said that the Cisco equipment was no longer available for use and HCS had to switch to Minerva. He said it is great because you can do YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook all from your TV. He said that at this point HCS is waiting for the switch out of the equipment and that if HCS does have the gap channels then HCS will have to do some altering to the current satellites. He said an additional satellite is not necessary. Steve said he is waiting to hear back from Fidelity on when they can install the equipment.

Steve said that he has been told that if you receive the basic television, then the services can still run off CoAx so you will not need a set top box for that. Councilman Nicolaides asked if you go one step up if you would need the fiber into your house. Steve said no and that it would run off the CAT5. Board Member Rusteberg asked if they would have to rewire and Steve said no. He said that they would add additional wiring, but only if they want the IP service. Board Member asked if the customer pays for that and Steve explained that initially, in the first pass through, HCS has not been charging the customer. Steve said he would follow up with Dan Kennedy to clarify the use of the set top box.

New Business

HCS SWOT Analysis: Andrea provided copies to the board and told the members that she, Dan Cook, and Steve had met to add to the SWOT Analysis.

Chairman Marron asked if Frontier was actually using fiber and said that they were telling people they were. He said that Frontier has been telling people they are related to the City of Highland. Andrea and Steve explained that they are telling people that HCS is renting the fiber lines from Frontier. Chairman Marron said that we need to watch out for their activity. Andrea suggested sending out a press release and Chairman Marron said that if we do so then HCS needs to be ready to go.

The board asked that the SWOT Analysis be placed on the agenda for the next meeting so that they had time to review it.

Selling/Leasing Wireless Routers: Steve said that he is researching being able to resell routers. Steve said that HCS would set up a program that would allow the customers to lease the routers and that he is currently looking at two or three different brands.

Vice-Chairman Boulanger asked what kind of discount HCS could receive and Steve stated that he is still receiving information but not the pricing. Steve said he is having Rice look into it. Steve also said he is looking into the same option with phones, but he doesn't want to have a heavy inventory.

Blocking of Commercial Static IP Addresses: This topic was previously discussed.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Telecommunications Advisory Board is scheduled for August 8, 2011 at 7:00 PM.

Adjournment

Board Member Rusteberg made a motion to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Vice-Chairman Boulanger. All members voted aye, none nay; the meeting adjourned at **7:35** p.m.